R. D. W.

Boston, Feb. 28, 1843.

My dear Webb:

106 I knew that you was a modest man, before I received your last favor, written on a part of the sheet occupied by our friend H. C. Wright. He speaks in eulogistic terms of "the Dublin friends — the Webbs, the Allens, the Haughtons," &c. — which, having seen, you are apprehensive will appear in the Liberator. "It would only make any one (who may read the Liberator in Ireland) laugh at its inaccuracy and exaggeration." Have you yet to learn, that among the penalties inflicted on true reformers, during their life-time, is that of being praised, (rarely does praise come, however,) by those who are intimately acquainted with them, far more highly than they themselves can endure, or the generations in which they live by the public, are willing to endorse? Think not to be appreciated, while duty compels you to act the part of moral Ishmaelites. Doubtless, there are thousands in Ireland, who are at all times ready to laugh when they hear the philanthropic labors of such "fanatics" and "incendiaries" as yourselves represented as exerting a powerful influence on the public mind, and as worthy of the highest commendation. Let them laugh! The laugh of such scorners is a stronger panegyric than that which excites it. I sincerely believe you are doing a great and good work, in the spirit of christian zeal and charity; that you are sowing imperishable seed for a bountiful harvest; that you are kindling a beacon-light that shall yet be plainly visible on both sides of the Atlantic; that it is not given to you to know what will be the extent of your influence, or the result of your labors in the great field of christian philanthropy. I believe Henry C. Wright simply does you justice in his letter, and speaks of you "without partiality and without hypocrisy." I believe it is not wrong to say, "Well done, good and faithful servants!" though it is not for mortals to add — "enter ye into the joy of your Lord." Hence, (in spite of your protestation, and at the risk of making you ridiculous in the eyes of many,) I shall certainly not mutilate H. C. W's letter, my dear Dublin friends. If I thought you were capable of being inflated by any such notice, I would suppress it; but your feet, I trust, are so firmly planted on an eternal foundation, that they never can be shaken, either by the breath of flattery, or the wave of persecution. Go on in your noble work, "in the patience of hope and the labor of love," remembering that it only requires faith, "like a grain of mustard seed," to cast mountains of prejudice and corruption into the sea. In your weakness, you are strong. "Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just."

Received, 3rd mo. 15th 1843.

It is so seldom I write to you, my dear Webb, (to my shame it is here recorded — but, do I not love and admire you, nevertheless?) and so many events of surpassing interest are constantly transpiring, here and abroad, worthy of notice and criticism, that when I attempt to endite an epistle for your eye, I am deeply perplexed to know where to begin, or what to omit. I feel as if I must take passage at once in the steamer, for Dublin via Liverpool, and hold a "palaver" with you and others, in your great, beautiful and wretched city, for at least a month — and so be "a living epistle," known and read of you all. This being confined to pen, ink and paper, where time is limited, and the heart has a world of freight on board of it to discharge, is terrible bondage. It is better than total non-intercourse, but scarcely better than throwing crumbs to those who are famishing for lack of regular meals. Reading and writing do not come by nature, but conversation does; and, hence, I love to talk a great deal better than I love to write.

It appears that you have heard of my recent severe illness. Now that I have recovered from it, it seems to me like awaking from a frightful dream. On the score of loathsomeness, the scarlatina (as I had it) is next to the small-pox. My family have all been quite ill, but are now happily convalescent. I have now four children, (all boys,) the youngest of whom is about six months old, and bears the name of a great and good man, who was lost in the steamer Lexington, two years ago — and who was endeared to me by many considerations — Charles Follen, formerly of Germany.

[We are driving our anti-slavery operations with rail-road speed, and success every where crowns our efforts. The result, I doubt not, will be the dissolution of the Union. I have no expectation that the bloody-minded South will be brought to repentance, but only to a terrible retribution. You may expect to hear of more exciting scenes and stormier times among us than have yet been witnessed; for, though we have passed through various important crises, the great crisis of all is yet to come!]

I am very much obliged to you, and others of your loving circle, for occasional numbers of the Dublin papers; and in them I am glad to see the reports of your meetings in the Royal Exchange. It is a fortunate circumstance that you are thus able to get your sentiments before the reading public; but the time is coming (mark that!) when you will not be permitted to do this. — But here I close abruptly to say a word to your beloved Hannah, begging to be affectionately remembered to those whose names it is here needless to specify.

Your faithful friend, Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

Boston, March 1, 1843.

Esteemed Friend Hannah Webb:

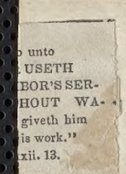
Chivalry, while it practically crushes and degrades woman, theoretically concedes that the wife is "the better half" of the husband. Of one thing I feel quite sure, that you twain, Richard and Hannah, are one, and where there is only one, there is no division into greater or less. Long may you live together on earth, one in spirit and purpose, and for ever be united beyond the grave in one glorious destiny! Such is my prayer.

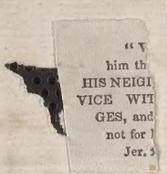
I thank you for the Sybilline leaf which you and Richard conjointly sent to me by the last steamer. It is an awakener of the most delightful reminiscences. That visit to Dublin! To be so cordially entertained by strangers, being a "foreigner" — to be welcomed to their fire-sides and their hearts — to ~~secure~~ obtain their confidence and esteem so liberally on so short an acquaintance — when I forget it all, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth! I know not that I have ever thanked you, formally, on paper, for your kindness to me during my brief sojourn in Dublin. I only know that "the thankless oft are noisiest in their thanks," and that my heart has ever since, like a fountain, been welling over with the chrystal waters of gratitude. But, no more on this point — you will say.

I feel rejoiced to hear that "you have all been pleased with the society of that single-hearted, strong limbed, indomitable laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, Henry C. Wright. He is indeed "a man and a brother." His circumference goes out, like the universe of God, embracing all things in its ~~expanse~~. On its altar, the fire of divine love seems to be continually burning. There are none so low in the abyss of human degradation and mystery, none so remote by geographical position, whom the arms of his philanthropy do not embrace. If he is "a man of one idea," the idea is this — that "love is the fulfilling of the law," and that to ~~dwell~~ in it is to dwell in God. You say that some who have listened to him have been edified, "and some shocked." For a long time to come, it will be his mission, I apprehend, to shock, rather than to edify. Your land, as well as ours, is in an awful condition — totally incapacitated to listen to the truth with calmness. It needs to be shocked and shaken as by an earthquake. The truths that he will utter will make the ears of the people to tingle; but all those who are seeking for light, and who rejoice to walk in it, will hear him gladly. I trust he will declare the whole truth, whether men will hear or forbear.

Referring to my boys, you ask — "How dost thou contrive about school? Does Helen teach them herself?" We are necessitated to do pretty much as our neighbors. George and William attend a private school, kept by an excellent young woman, who, though not specially interested in the subject of non-resistance, has an excellent "faculty" of managing children, without a frequent resort to pains and penalties. Our boys (as far as they are developed) have a large share of independence and firmness, and require a steady guidance. Between schools, it is difficult to keep them at all times shut up in the house; and if they play out of doors, they are liable to hear improper language from vicious boys. It is a perilous career, in this world of ours as society is now constituted, from childhood to old age; and every parent has just cause to feel anxious for the future course and welfare of his children.

Richard D. Webb,
Printer,
Dublin,
Ireland.





Jamaica, 3rd mo. 15th 1845.

At last, in the commonwealth of Massachusetts, human beings who love each other may be united together in "holy wedlock," even though the hue of their skin may not perfectly harmonize! Doubtless you have seen something in the Liberator about an "intermarriage law" here, by which the marriage of white and colored persons is declared null and void. It was an old law, made more than a hundred years ago, in the days of slavery on the soil of the Pilgrims. As it was a wrong upon human rights, and a disgrace to our statute books, the abolitionists have endeavored, for the last six years, to procure its repeal by petitioning the Legislature; but they have sustained an annual defeat until the present session, when success perched upon their standard. The law has been repealed — and thus another staggering blow has been given to the monster prejudice. Our object has been not to promote "amalgamation," but to establish justice, and vindicate the equality of the human race. Regretting that I have neither time nor space to write more, and wishing you and yours the choicest blessings of heaven, I remain,

Your grateful friend,

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.